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ABSTRACT

One of two Massachusetts reports on minority students in special education, the booklet contains eight articles focusing on the parent's role in special education decision making. The initial article discusses steps to help parents prepare for the team meeting. The effects of misplacement are noted in the next article. The following article advises parents to ask the "right" questions during the team evaluation process. A fourth article lists 58 determinants which could influence language learning and thus learning in general. The Brockton Battery, a series of assessments for bilingual students in the areas of reading readiness, learning rate and method, language abilities, and adaptive behavior, is described next. The sixth article addresses five dimensions of child development and points out the need for effective parenting in each: perceptual, psychomotor, cognitive, affective, and volitional dimensions. A minority parent training program suitable for presentation in an individualized or group format (depending in part upon cultural preferences) is described next and session content is outlined. The final article considers the role of an advocate in the special education process and a list of state agencies is provided as help in determining which agencies to choose. (CL)

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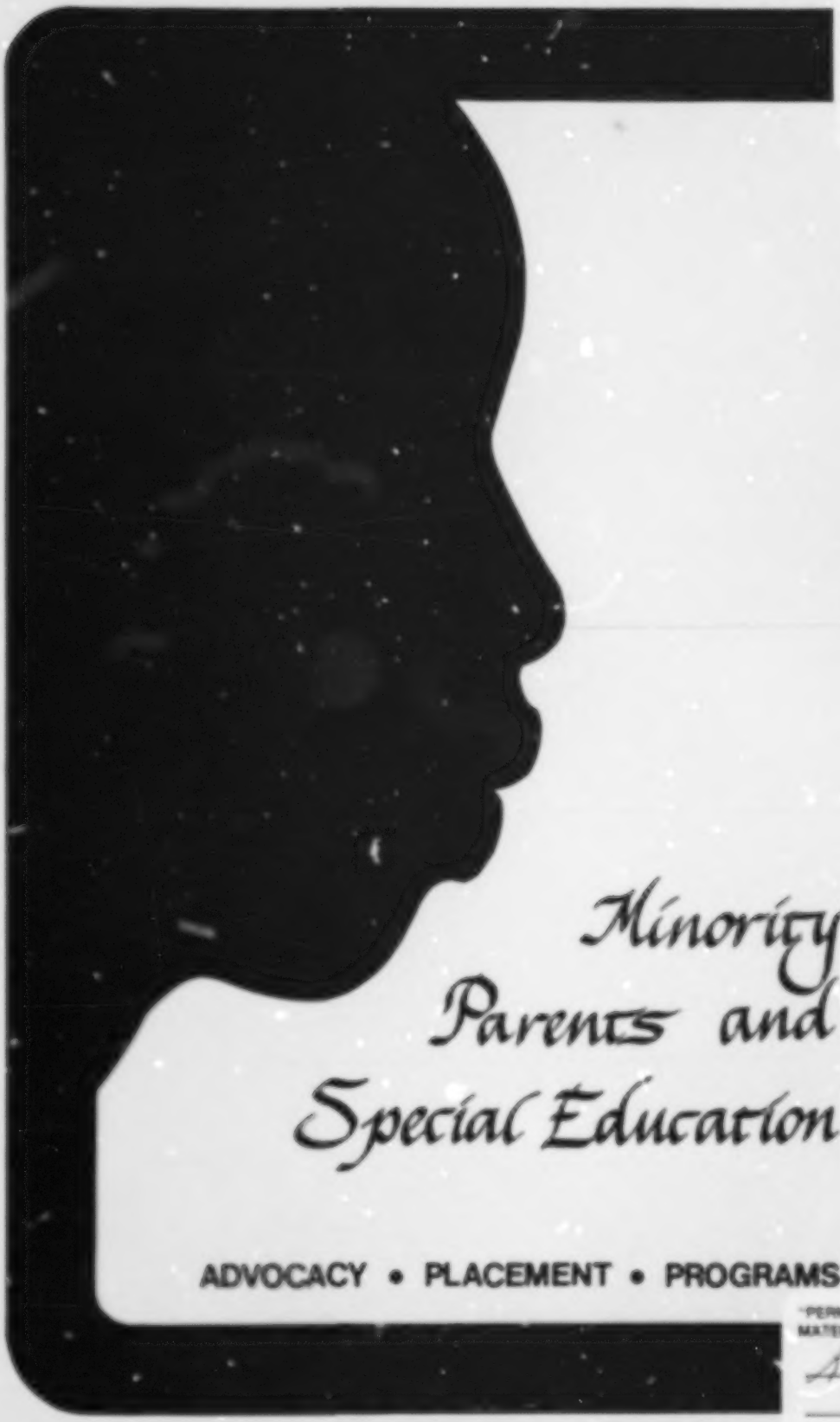

Minority Parents and Special Education

ADVOCACY • PLACEMENT • PROGRAMS

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BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS/DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES • OVER/UNDER REPRESENTATION PROJECT

MINORITY PARENTS
AND
SPECIAL EDUCATION

ADVOCACY - PLACEMENT - PROGRAMS

Edited by Idola J. Williams & Dr. Ronda Goodale

Boston Public Schools

Student Support Services

Over/Under Representation Project

1983

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MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

The Boston Public Schools is committed to equal educational opportunity for all students.

We are pleased to assume a leadership role by providing this publication which addresses the unique needs of minority parents of special needs students. Contributions to this document are from individuals who have a wide breadth of experience in this area.

We hope the articles from this publication, the first of its kind in the country, will help professionals become more aware of the specific problems experienced by minority parents of special needs students.

Robert R. Spillane, Superintendent
Boston Public Schools

26 COURT STREET, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02108 • 726-6200 AREA 617

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The Department of Student Support Services is fully supportive of providing the most appropriate and least restrictive special education placement for all special needs students. The Over/Under Representation Project which investigates the reasons for disproportionate placement of minorities in certain special education programs has been fully endorsed by all superintendents and school committees since 1979, when the project was originally initiated.

The Department of Student Support Services is pleased to sponsor the first publication in the United States which specifically addresses issues relevant to minority parents of special needs students. We hope that this booklet will serve as a resource for all individuals involved in the delivery of quality special services to all children who have handicapping conditions.

Kenneth G. Caldwell, Manager
Student Support Services

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Massachusetts Advocacy - The Parent In an Advocate Role in the 766 Process

- Peggy Janey

The Advocacy Center was instrumental in bringing the issues of disproportionate placement of minorities in special education programs to the attention of the State Department of Education and has played an active role in monitoring the subsequent remediation activities of the involved school districts. The Center has focused upon minority special education issues in Holyoke, Cambridge, Hudson, Lowell, and other school districts in Massachusetts. Massachusetts Advocacy Center has also developed expertise in 766 parent training.

The Massachusetts Advocacy Center has long recognized the need for parents' monitoring of the 766 process to assure non-discriminatory treatment for minority students. The Center additionally examined the need for strong parental involvement in the 766 process.

Preparing for the Team Meeting

- Step 1: Set the Date

When the TEAM Meeting is scheduled, be sure it is set for a time which is mutually convenient for you (including anyone you want to bring with you) and the school. If it is not convenient for you to attend on the date the school suggests, you can suggest several other times when you can meet so that the meeting can include you. Also be sure to schedule enough time to discuss your concerns. If the meeting time is up and you do not feel you have had enough time, schedule another meeting to continue the discussion.

- Step 2: Gather Together All Your Relevant Records and Information

Be sure to get copies of any assessments, test results, or evaluations that have been done as part of the CORE evaluation process. You may have to call the TEAM Chairperson, Director of Special Education, or professionals themselves for these copies. Be sure to let the TEAM Chairperson know that if you do not have the assessments before the meetings, you will have to reschedule the meeting. If the school fails to provide you with copies of the assessments, complain in writing or by telephone to the superintendent and Regional Office. You need this information so that you can participate in the TEAM Meeting as an equal member.

- Step 3: Study Your Assessments

Read over all the assessments and pay special attention to the recommendations written into the assessments. If you do not understand the reports or the recommendations, be sure to call the professionals responsible for an interpretation in everyday language. Look especially for the specific details related to the assessments. For example, if counseling is recommended, you will want to know how often counseling sessions should take place, what kind of approach would be most effective, and what qualifications the counselor should have.

As you read the recommendations, ask yourself which recommendations you agree with and which you do not agree with. If you agree with the recommendations, you will need to make sure that any services the school suggests conform to these recommendations. If you do not agree with the recommendations or if certain concerns you have are not addressed in the recommendations, you should ask for an independent evaluation, a "second opinion" based on new assessments done by professionals outside the school system. The school must pay for any independent assessments but only if they have been done by the school in its own evaluation process. If you would like to have additional assessments, you can offer to pay for them yourself or use your own insurance for that purpose.

- Step 4: Picture the Kind of Program You Want for Your Child

First make a "laundry list" of all the things you want to see in a program for your child. Include recommendations made in the assessments as well as your own ideas. List the kind of setting you would like, the approach to reading and other basic skills, approach to discipline, teacher-child ratio, special teaching materials, the kind of communication you expect between the school and family, types of physical education activities, the extent to which you want your child integrated into regular classes, the use of teacher aides, and the kind of transportation your child needs. You will probably think of other things. If you need to, do not hesitate to call the professionals who did the assessments to get clarification of their recommendations. List as many services as you think your child needs even if you have been told the school doesn't have these services.

Next select the services you think are most important for your child. Put a star next to these services. Look back to the professional assessments to get back-up "evidence" for any of your requests. Also recall good and bad experiences your child has had in school to support your requests. Take these notes to the CAM Meeting and don't be afraid to refer to them.

- Step 5: Visit Several Programs You Think Might Be Good For Your Child

Be sure to visit your child's present classroom as well, and ask the school to suggest any other programs or classes that might be appropriate. Spend at least an hour in the class you are visiting. Observe how the teacher rewards and disciplines your child. Note how the children are introduced to new activities and how they move from one activity to another.

Observe whether the teacher offers alternative ways of learning to the children. Write down the things you like and the things you don't like. You may also want to talk with other parents about their experiences with the classroom or program. Always check out a classroom before you agree to a placement.

- Step 6: Go Over Your Child's Educational Plan (IEP)

Review each objective and decide whether your child has learned what the IEP promised he or she would learn under the program. If your child has made progress, you can argue that the plan is appropriate and adequate. If no progress has been made you can argue that the placement should be changed.

- Step 7: Think About the Worst Thing that Could Happen and What You Will Do

Are you prepared to accept some parts of the IEP and reject others? Are you prepared to request an independent evaluation if you don't agree with the school's recommendations? Are you prepared to reject the IEP and begin the appeals process? Don't hesitate to talk with an advocate or another parent about the possibilities and choices you have.

766 Rights and Responsibilities of Parents and Schools

Beside each right or responsibility listed below, place the letter "p" when the right/responsibility belongs to the PARENT in the 766 process of the letter "s" when the right/responsibility belongs to the SCHOOL. Some rights/responsibilities may belong to both parents and school.

1. Right to request an evaluation for special education services.
2. Right to have an independent observer at all meetings.
3. Right to request an independent evaluation.
4. Responsibility to sign the Educational Plan (IEP).
5. Right to a pre-evaluation meeting.
6. Right to choose specific assessments before the evaluation begins.
7. Responsibility to hold a TEAM Meeting to write an IEP by 30 school days after a written request for evaluation or permission for evaluation has been given.
8. Right to all written reports from the evaluation.
9. Right to request a new meeting at any time during the Plan's duration.

10. Right to request the help of the Regional Office Bureau of Appeals to set up a parent/school conference if no IEP is received.

11. Responsibility to attend the TEAM Meeting.

12. Responsibility to explain the purposes and goals of tests to be done.

13. Responsibility to send progress reports during the school year.

14. Right to request a hearing.

15. Responsibility to make known any changes or modifications in the child's educational program.

16. Responsibility to provide an interpreter at all meetings.

17. Right to withdraw permission for special education services.

Assessment Issues as Related to Identification and Placement of Special Needs Students: A Realistic View

- Louise LaFontaine

The History of placement and the issues involved around it goes back to a legal framework provided by certain landmark legal decisions in California (Diane vs. State Board of Education. C-70-37 (RFP Dist. N. Calif.), 1970) and (Larry P. vs. Riles. UDLW 2033 (U.S. June 21) 1972). The outcome of such decisions was a clear statement that placement must be based on non-biased identification of special needs students. This, of course, leads to the larger issue of what is meant by non-biased assessment and how it can be implemented.

Misclassification of students denies them their basic rights to an appropriate education and violates the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments which provide that a person shall not be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law. Denials of appropriate education may be seen as equivalent to denial of the ability to acquire property: i.e., function effectively in an economic situation. The Fourteenth Amendment also requires equal treatment for all citizen and equal protection. Misclassification of students frequently results in the placement of a disproportionate number of minority students in special classes. The fact that violations of fundamental rights can and does occur for students dictates that caution in the testing, classifying, and placement of students is vital.

A fundamental problem in testing is the choice of the assessment instruments; particularly the standardized IQ and aptitude tests. Historically, most of these tests have been developed using white middle class socioeconomic groups of children for standardization procedures. Thus, it may be stated that these tests reflect a middle class, predominantly white culture. Language is a major indicator of culture and use of appropriate language is a prime requisite for responding in most test situations, especially in an IQ or aptitude test. In addition, minority children may come from homes where the native language is other than English. These children are in a double bind. They are being assessed by instruments which reflect a culture and language different from their own. Even when the language of the home is English, the language used is based on a middle class white terminology.

These problems have been recognized and certain solutions proposed. The courts have supported measures to disallow the use of IQ tests alone for placement, and have mandated that children be tested in the primary language of the home. A multi-disciplinary approach to assessment which includes a battery of tests in the child's primary language has been the result of these provisions. There has also been a broadening of the view of assessments in general. Children are

no longer assessed by IQ and aptitude tests alone. It appears that many such tests primarily reflect cultural, rather than intellectual factors and may not be a true reflection of a child's potential. Developmental and adaptive behavior scales are now incorporated in assessment batteries; these instruments do not require scoring for a right or wrong answer but allow for a more descriptive developmental view of a child.

The above solutions all point in the right directions. The problem lies in appropriate and effective administration of such procedures. In conjunction with this, the effects of misplacement need to be discussed.

As was stated earlier, there has been a disproportionate number of minority children in special classes. This leads to problems of stigmatization by others and problems for the individual in relation to such things as self-concept, development of social skills, and interaction with peers. There is a large body of research literature on efficacy studies which looks at issues related to the relative effectiveness of placing students in regular or self-contained special classes. The outcome of this research is equivocal; the real issue that should be researched is how many of these students were misdiagnosed and misclassified. After this is determined, the efficacy of a particular type of placement could be studied. Interestingly enough, most research in this area focuses on the mild special needs students since the more severely involved student was not viewed as being mainstreamed and placement issues appeared less confusing. This population also did not receive educational services, in most cases, until recent years, so the research was limited to the mildly involved student. To a large extent, the effects of improper placement on the student has not been sufficiently studied.

Some solutions offered to avoid stigma and poor self-concept have focused on efforts to do away with labeling of students. In reality, this effort has largely failed for alternative labels which are equally stigmatizing have frequently replaced the old labels. Once again, the real issue is to prevent improper placement of students through effective evaluation procedures, rather than trying to alleviate the damage done by misplacement. Therefore, broader more tenable assessments are seen as a necessity. But what does this mean in terms of placement? It points to the importance of fluidity of placements and alternative models related to compensatory education procedures when needed.

Reevaluation periodically is another major component of a good placement program which means realistically viewing a student's strenths and weaknesses. This is only a starting point. First, the student's strenths and weaknesses must be properly delineated; second, an appropriate placement and educational program must be determined, but the student and the program must be viewed in relation to the culture in which he or she will be expected to function. Resources should provide students with the necessary tools to function in

that culture. To not recognize this necessity is even more discriminating than to misdiagnose, misclassify, and misplace a child. Why discuss whether a child has been misplaced because of language and other cultural barriers and then move that child to another setting where poor performance is inevitable because of a lack of proper skills? Education has taken a giant step in the right direction by recognizing the seriousness of inappropriate and unfair testing and placement procedures. Now, educators must go further and supply intensive inclusive remedial and compensatory programs that encompass the school, home, and community environment.

A Two-Edged Sword: Double Jeopardy of Students, Hobson's Choice for the Special Education Department

- Daniel McCarthy

Minority and linguistic minority parents should be quite cautious whenever their children are involved in special education programs. They must make certain that they are given the opportunity to be participants in the team evaluation process. Parents have the right to have any item they may not understand fully explained to them in terms which are clear and easily comprehensible. Many professional educators use jargon or other technical language which actually hinders communication when lay persons are team participants. Parents who are linguistic minorities should make sure that an interpreter is available if their knowledge of the English language does not allow them to fully participate in the team process. They should also make certain that their child was assessed in his/her dominant language. Translation of all written materials should be made available to these same parents without unreasonable or unnecessary delays.

Most parents are aware that teachers and special education staff members are both motivated and committed to provide the best possible services for children in need of special education. If these professionals see that a youngster is experiencing difficulty in learning and/or behavior and they know that extra help is available, they will usually do everything in their power to secure what they believe to be needed services for that youngster. In some cases these staff may have moved too quickly and may have made certain assumptions concerning individual children and their needs which are not necessarily valid. For example, staff may not have fully explored the issue of language dominance or proficiency or they may not have been fully invested in trying to work with the classroom teacher to attempt to resolve the problem at that level. In some cases they may not have extended themselves to meet with the parent at a time convenient to the parent, or it may have been too difficult to schedule the services of an interpreter for the meeting.

Parents should not feel flustered or rushed by the team evaluation process. They are fully members of the team, and in fact have the ultimate right to accept or reject the findings and recommendations of the team. Parents who are well informed and ask the right questions usually can be assured that any placement recommendation is for compelling educational reasons and is in the best interests of the child.

The "right questions" may include such questions as the following:

"How long have you been aware that my child has had this difficulty?"

"What was done about it immediately?"

"What kinds of changes came about because of an intervention?"

"Is there a problem with the program or with my child?"

"Wouldn't more help outside the classroom allow my child to stay in the mainstream?"

"Was my child fully assessed in his dominant language?"

"Was my child assessed in the language where his/her greatest proficiency is apparent?"

"Were professionals who were linguistically and culturally attuned to the needs of my child included on the team?"

"Is the interpreter fully qualified to translate technical information?"

"Why is my child being moved from 502.1 or 502.2 to 502.4 without an attempt in 502.3 (or any less restrictive program) etc.?"

as well as any questions which deal reasonably with the adequacy and timeliness of the team process.

Some of the problems which may face children who are placed in restrictive programs can be quite devastating. No matter how much assurance you receive from your ETL, many children who are placed in self-contained special classes are tracked. That is, they are planned for as a separate adjunct to the regular curriculum. Once a youngster is placed in a special class it is very difficult to get that child back into the mainstream. Often for the first time, the child feels successful. The parents are not being called in weekly for conferences about their child's behavior by the principal. There seem to be less hassles with transportation. The student gets a lot of undivided attention, and perhaps becomes overly dependent upon it. The classes are much smaller and the people really seem to know how to handle the student's learning or behavior problem. All of these factors contribute to an unwillingness to move a student to a less restrictive program.

Parents should be concerned if the team recommends a 502.3 program. student usually receives about 10-12 hours of special education instruction per week, but he may go to three or four different specialist, such as the resource room teacher, the learning disabilities specialist, the speech therapist, and the school adjustment counselor to receive it. His schedule may be scattered and if he is in middle school or above he may be seeing as many as ten different teachers a week. This is especially difficult for a student who may have difficulty in spatial organization or in forming relationships.

There are many modifications or accommodations which can be made with the assistance of specialists in the regular education program which will allow the student to stay in his/her regular class. The student may have a contract with the teacher for completing work or for appropriate behavior. Individual learning packets can be prepared at the student's level of skill development and comprehension. Differential assignments and reporting requirements may be utilized. All of these accommodations require close collaboration among the teacher and specialists to be successfully carried out. Throughout the system there are many examples of students with even moderate to substantial

special needs who have been able to benefit from the enriching experience of the regular class while receiving appropriate as well as carefully designed special education services.

There are students as well who for compelling educational reasons require placement in the more restrictive in-school prototypes. Whenever the parent is persuaded by the evidence presented by the team that a restrictive placement is in the best interests of the child, the parent should make certain that the goals and objectives developed by the team for the student include specific adaptive behaviors which will allow the student to participate in and benefit from a mainstream experience as soon as he/she is ready.

The minority and linguistic minority parent can best assure that due process and relevant educational issues are fully addressed in the IEP and team evaluation process by participating in that process as a member of the team, working together with the other concerned team members. In this way collaborative interests of home and school will be brought to bear on the special education needs of the youngster being considered for placement.

Language Learning Determinants: Applications for Effective Planning of School Programs and Individual Educational Linited English Proficient Students

- Walter McClennen © 1983

Teachers and school systems have for centuries asked themselves how to best educate children. Inevitably, some children do better in school than others. One sub-group within the educational system of the United States consists of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students. Due to English language limitations, as well as cultural issues, these students have unique needs within our school systems. However, in many other respects, the LEP students are no different from the standard curriculum students: they span the range from low achievers to those who excel academically. When educators are called upon to attend to the difficulties of those who are not achieving well and who are not progressing effectively in either their first language (L1) or their second language (L2), they must ask themselves, "What can we conclude might be the reasons for the limited progress?" The answer to this question requires, before anything, a clear picture of all the possible variables involved in the student's education.

The following outline attempts to delineate the broad range of possible determinants that can affect the L2 learning progress of LEP students. This should help educators responsible for program development and the development of Individual Educational Plans (IEP's) to clearly see the possible issues that might be hindering second language acquisition. The two columns to the right of each element of the outline are marked so as to indicate the author's opinion as to whether or not the school can influence the determinant in some way. The fourth column then goes on to suggest who within the school system, if anybody, might be responsible for taking action to improve the situation in order to help the student. Finally, the last column suggests the possible time span during which each determinant might have an effect.

Although an attempt has been made to include the broadest range of possible factors, the author is aware that there are probably a number of others that are not listed. These may be of a general nature, or unique to a specific school system and its LEP population. Space has been left at the end of each section for readers to add determinants that they have found important.

The outline itself not only can help educators to understand a problem, but also can serve as a foundation for future interesting research in the area of second language learning. In and of itself, this is basically a descriptive rather than an advocacy document. However, there are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from this outline. They may be found on the last page.

The main source for much of this outline is more experiential than theoretical or data-based. Participating in hundreds of staff meetings to help determine educational plans for LEP students in the Framingham (Massachusetts) Public Schools through the last twelve years, the author has directly observed the recurrent aspect of nearly all of these determinants at one time or another.

Personal experiences in learning three foreign languages in the last twenty-five years and observing his four children acquire their first, and in some cases, second languages have also served as a basis for this information.

Note:

"Change or Information Agents" refers to people within the educational system who can either serve to aid or help or improve the student's situation related to any determinant. Such help would come via specific actions or by insuring that appropriate school staff have the information to act in the student's best interest. Ten such "agents" are referred to in the following pages and they are abbreviated as follows:

1. Central Administration - Cent. Admin.
2. Transitional Bilingual Education/English as a Second Language Program - TBE/ESL
3. Special Education - SPED
4. Chapter I - Ch. I
5. Teacher - Teach.
6. Counselor - Social Worker - C/SW (sometimes C alone)
7. Principal - Princ.
8. Medical Personnel - Med.
9. Gifted and Talented Program - G&T
10. Publishers - Pubs.
11. Any of #1-7 above - Any-All

LANGUAGE LEARNING DETERMINANTS

DETERMINANTS	Subject to school influence	Beyond school influence	Change or information agent(s)	Possible * time span of effects in years ½ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I Family Factors				
A. Home talk/home education	#		Any-All	.....
B. Home reading to child, ages 1-10 (L1 and/or L2)	#		Any-All	----------
C. Home resources: games, books, effective TV use	#		Any-All	----------
D. Marital status		#	C/SW **	----------
E. Extended family status		#	C/SW	----------
F. Economic status		#	Ch. I (status changed; ed. needs addressed)	----------
G. Parental message related to work		#	C/SW	----------
H. Parental message related to school	#		Any-All	.....
I. Level of education		#	C/SW	----------
J. Parental involvement in school	#		Any-All	----------

* time span code:

..... - Minimum time span of factor effect
---------- - Full range of possible factor effect

** In this and in a number of subsequent areas, the determinant itself is beyond school influence, but an "agent" is listed because the effects of the determinant can and should be addressed by the schools, even if ony in an information-sharing sense.

DETERMINANTS	Subject to school influence	Beyond school influence	Change or information agent(s)	Possible time span of effects in years ½ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
K. Existance of migratory pattern		#	C/SW	----------
L. Drug and/or alcohol abuse in family		#	C/SW	----------
M. Child abuse/neglect within family	#		Med., Princ., C/SW refer to state authorities	----------
N. Bedtime	#		Any-All	----------
O. Parental acceptance of school recommendations	#		Any-All	----------
II Social/Cultural Factors				
A. Social system typology: rural (stable, unstable) urban (stable, unstable)		#	Any-All	---------- Look for signs of adaptability to new situation
B. Religion - value placed on education		#	C/SW	----------
- time of religious services if on school nights		#	Cent. Admin. if anybody	----------
C. Culture: value placed pluralistic outlook		#	Any-All	----------
D. Culture: value placed on foreign language learning		#	Any-All	----------
E. "Culture Shock"	#		TBE/ESL & Any-All	... ----------

DETERMINANTS	Subject to school influence	Beyond school influence	Change or information agent(s)	Possible time span of effects in years ½ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
F. Isolation from/ integration with English speaking community		∅	Any-All (re: school setting opportunities)	----------
G. Political background vis-a-vis USA/homeland		∅	TBE/ESL (clarification of historical background)	... ----------
H. Peer influence				
- from L1 group	∅		Teach., C	----------
- from L2 group	∅		Teach., C	----------
III Biological Factors				
A. Age		∅	-	- subject to debate - note literacy as related to age
B. Sex		∅	-	no observed effects
C. Physical Disability ***		∅	Teach., SPED, Med.	----------
D. Learning Disability (non-emotional based) ***	∅		SPED, Teach.	..... ----------
E. Chronic illness		∅	Med.	----------

*** Subject to state and federal mandates related to Special Education

DETERMINANTS	Subject to school influence	Beyond school influence	Change or information agent(s)	Possible time span of effects in years ½ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
IV Intelligence Factors				
A. General intelligence ...	ø (acquired knowledge/ applications aspect)	ø (inate capacity aspect)	SPED (low level) G&T (high level) Ch. I (ec. & ed. deprived) Teach. (all)	..... ----------
B. Language Specific Intelligence - speed of acquistion (both L1 & L2)		ø	TBE/ESL	----------
- number of languages capable of mastering		ø	TBE/ESL SPED (if mastery is possible in only one language)	----------
V Student Centered Educational Factors				
A. Time or arrival during school year		ø	TBE/ESL	. --
B. Academic achievement in L1 at time of arrival		ø	TBE/ESL Ch. I	. ----------
C. Ability in L2 at time of arrival		ø	TBE/ESL	no effect - assuming effective ESL instruction
D. Orientation toward school: "rejectionism" to "studentism"	ø		Teach.	----------
E. Student learning style		ø	Teach.	----------

	DETERMINANTS	Subject to school influence	Beyond school influence	Change or information agent(s)	Possible time span of effects in years ½ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
VI	Student Centered Affective Factors				
	A. Self Image	#		Teach., C TBE/ESL (cultural aspect)	----------
	B. Attitude vis-a-vis authority figures	#		Teach., C	----------
	C. Attitude vis-a-vis interaction with other cultures	#		Teach., C, TBE/ESL	----------
	D. Attitude vis-a-vis the new language and culture	#		Teach., C, TBE/ESL	.. ---------- Look for change from rejection to acceptance
	E. Learning Disability ***	#		C/SW, SPEL, Teach.	... ----------
VII	Language Factors				
	A. L1 Skills - Oral	#		TBE	... ----------
	B. L1 Skills - Literacy	#		TBE	... ----------
	C. L2 Skills - Oral: proficiency as compared to L1	#		TBE/ESL	... ----------
	D. L2 Skills - Literacy: proficiency as compared to L1	#		TBE/ESL	... ----------
	E. Linguistic relationship between L1 & L2 - oral		#	TBE/ESL	... ----------
	F. Written form relationship between L1 & L2		#	TBE/ESL	. --

	DETERMINANTS	Subject to school influence	Beyond school influence	Change or information agent(s)	Possible time span of effects in years ½ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
VIII	School Program Educational Factors				
	A. Education system student came from		#	Any-All	----------
	B. School system entered: typology of programs offered	#		Cent. Admin. TBE/ESL	----------
	C. School system entered: stability	#		Cent. Admin.	----------
	D. School system entered: extent of pluralistic orientation	#		Cent. Admin.	----------
	E. School system entered: extent of teacher training in L1 - L2 issues	#		Cent. Admin.	----------
	F. School system entered: extent of curriculum development and review systems	#		Cent. Admin. TBE/ESL	----------
	G. School system entered: extent of effective student evaluation systems	#		Cent. Admin. TBE/ESL	----------
	H. Attendance	#		Princ., C/SW	----------
	I. Availability of appropriate materials	#		Pubs. Cent. Admin. TBE/ESL	----------

CONCLUSIONS

1. Fifty-eight determinants have been listed, any number of which could have a significant impact on language learning, and consequently, on learning in general.

2. Approximately one half of the determinants are subject to school influence.

3. Approximately one half of the determinants are not subject to school influence.

4. In almost all areas, there is someone with the school system who can and should be attending to the resultant needs of the student arising from each specific area.

5. Educational efforts that focus on a small number of the determinants that have not yet proven to be the central determinants for a specific LEP population are likely to prove fruitless.

6. The first step for effectively meeting the needs of the LEP population in any community is a statistical analysis of the population to determine what are the factors that are likely to be the central ones for that specific population.

7. In the field of education for language minority students, there is a tremendous need for research into the relative importance of the varying determinants as they relate to specific cultural subgroups of LEP students.

The Brockton Battery: A Special Needs Assessment for Bilingual Students

- Joanne Pongonis

James Malonson

Brockton is a medium sized urban community with a school population of approximately 20,000 of which about 1900 are identified as students with special needs. During the past several years, the ethnic composition of the student body, including both black and bilingual students has risen significantly. As a result, the school system and, in particular, the Special Education Department, has had to institute a variety of strategies to meet their unique needs.

Despite the Brockton Special Education Department's sensitivity to the needs of minority and bilingual students and in spite of the implementation of several unique and nationally recognized program models, such as Project Mainstream and Project Open, a report issued by the Massachusetts Advocacy Center entitled Double Jeopardy documented evidence that the Brockton Public Schools were denying equal educational opportunity to this population by placing them into special education prototypes in disproportionate numbers relative to their percentages in the school age population.

In response to a mandate from the Massachusetts State Department of Education, the Director of Special Education, Dr. Joseph Gilbert, developed a comprehensive plan to remediate the problems outlined. Part of that plan was to utilize P.L. 94-142 funds to develop a series of non-discriminatory assessments. The result was The Brockton Battery: A Special Needs Assessment for Bilingual Students.

The Brockton Battery is a series of special needs assessments for bilingual students in the areas of reading readiness, learning rate and method, language abilities, and adaptive behavior. The assessments were developed under the direction of Dr. Ken Sennett, Department Head for Pre-School through Grade 8 Special Education Programs in the Brockton Public Schools. The overall goal in the development of The Brockton Battery was to achieve compliance with Federal and State regulatory requirements concerning the non-discrimanatory assessment of bilingual students being considered for Special Education placement.

Non-discriminatory Assessment

Court decisions in recent years have focused a great deal of attention on unfair discrimination in assessment in relationship to black children, students with sensory or other physical impairments, and children with cultural and linguistic differences. In addition, a significant amount of research in the field of Special Education has occurred in an attempt to develop non-biased assessment processes and practices.

In developing The Brockton Battery as a non-discriminatory assessment tool, the Brockton Special Education Department utilized both statutory requirements and professional standards as guidelines. The regulatory mandates are those contained in P.L. 94-142 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

P.L. 94-142

1. More than a single procedure should be utilized to determine the criteria for developing an individualized educational program.

2. In the assurance of the right of a handicapped child to a racially or culturally non-discriminatory assessment, evaluation materials and procedures should be administered in the child's native language.

3. The child should be assessed in areas related to his disability, such as social and emotional status, academic performance, communicative status, and adaptive behavior.

Civil Rights Act of 1964

1. Test materials cannot be selected and administered in a manner that is discriminatory on the basis of race, color, sex or national origin.

2. Special education programs (including assessment practices) must be equally effective for children of all cultural backgrounds.

3. Intellectual development as well as adaptive behavior should be factors considered in assigning children to special education programs.

Professional standards were also utilized as guidelines in the development of The Brockton Battery. These include the following:

1. The assessor attempts to determine how information is received, stored, and expressed by the child.

2. The assessor provides accurate information about the child's present levels and modes functioning within the context of his culture.

3. The assessor identifies the specific educational needs of the child.

4. The assessor focuses on the assets and strengths upon which the child can capitalize in the learning situation.

Development Process

A group of individuals with both special education and bilingual education backgrounds was formed for the task of developing some valid instruments for the purpose of diagnosing the special needs of bilingual children. The group included administrators, teachers, counselors, and parents. Two target groups of bilingual students were selected: Puerto Rican and Cape Verdean.

Existing tests were surveyed revealing a paucity of valid instruments for use with these populations.

a. Most tests in Spanish were written for Mexican or Cuban students.

b. There were no instruments written in Crioulo, the language of Cape Verde.

Since the current state of testing with these selected populations of bilingual students was in a virtual state of nonexistence, the group decided to construct a battery of assessments to meet the needs of the Brockton Public Schools in matters of non-discriminatory assessment.

The group designated three major purposes in the development of The Brockton Battery:

a. To construct a reliable and valid assessment instrument that would allow Bilingual and Special Education staff to:

   1. ascertain the existence of an individual student's special educational needs

   2. determine the academic area affected

   3. to write individualized educational plans for bilingual students.

b. To construct a diagnostic index which could assist Bilingual teachers in the identification of high risk children.

c. To determine the reliability, validity and predictive value of the assessment instruments.

The group's major assumption upon which two aspects of The Brockton Battery, the Tests of Reading Abilities and The Tests of Language Abilities, were constructed was that the underlying basis for language and reading, as applied in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Crioulo, is universal regardless of the language. The group determined that if this were true, a child's reading readiness abilities could be tested in his native language, and the probability of predicting academic success, not only in his native language but in English, would be possible.

The Test of Reading Abilities and The Test of Language Abilities were developed by Roberta Cohen, Dr. Ken Sennett, Linda Gershman, and Helder Varela. The Spanish version of both tests was administered to a sample of first grade Hispanic students; the Portuguese/Crioulo versions to a sample of first grade Cape Verdean students.

An analysis of the results for the reliability and validity of the instruments supported the following conclusions:

a. The tests had sufficient reliability and validity to be used with the local targeted populations.

b. The results tended to support the notion that readiness abilities are universal skills which, if present in a child's native language, also would tend to be present in English.

In addition to the tests of Reading and Language, The Brockton Battery consists of Tests of Learning Rate and Method and the Adaptive Behavior Scales. The Tests of Learning Rate and Method was developed by utilizing the Mills Test of Learning Aptitude as a model and adapting the instructions and vocabulary utilized into Spanish, Portuguese and Crioulo. The Adaptive Behavior Scale consists of a series of questions asked in the primary language of the respondent to determine the child's ability to function within his family, home, and community. Bilingual adjustment counselors, as well as special education personnel participated in the development of these scales.

The Tests

In general, The Brockton Battery is a set of assessments organized around Tests of Reading Abilities, Tests of Language Abilities, Tests of Learning Rate and Method, and Adaptive Behavior Scales. Each set of tests has three versions: Spanish, Portuguese, and Crioulo. The Adaptive Behavior Scales are also in English. The entire Battery can be administered to a given child for the purposes of a special needs evaluation, or a specific aspect of the Battery, such as the index of reading readiness or the Adaptive Behavior Scale can be administered.

Student test booklets exist for each of the tests and the Adaptive Behavior Scale. An Administrative Manual has also been developed with instructions for administration and scoring of each of the tests. The examiner needs to be proficient in the language edition of a given series of tests.

The Tests of Reading Abilities

This portion of the Brockton Battery contains fifteen sub-tests which determine the child's ability with those skills which have been found to underlie the successful beginning Reading experience. These subtests are tests of reading readiness and can be utilized to develop an index of reading readiness for identifying high risk students.

The Reading readiness subtests include:

- pencil use and name writing
- visual discrimination for letters
- letter reversals
- sequenced letter reversals
- visual discrimination for words

- rhyming words
- minimal sound pairs
- auditory discrimination for initial sounds
- auditory matching of initial sounds
- auditory discrimination for ending sounds
- auditory matching of initial sounds
- auditory matching - consonant blends

A scoring sheet and a student diagnostic profile appear on the student's test booklet. Raw scores can be converted to percentiles by using a chart provided in the Administrator's Manual. The percentiles enable the examiner or instructor to visually identify the child's strengths and weaknesses in reading.

The Tests of Language Abilities

The Tests of Language Abilities consist of four subtests with the overall purpose of determining the bilingual child's functional levels of receptive language, expressive language, syntax and elicited speech.

Receptive Language

In this subtest, the examiner reads a stimulus workd, such as "cabalo" or "boton". The child is asked to select a picture from a group of four which identifies the word which the examiner has spoken. The child's incorrect answers are noted and transferred to a scoring sheet. The total number of correct answers is noted. Levels of receptive language can be determined: concrete, function, category, and abstract.

Expressive Language

In this subtest, the child is asked to name pictures. The examiner points to each of the first four pictures and asks the child to identify the picture. The child continues through the rest of the pictures on his own. The exact response of the child as it appears on the answer sheet is given a check mark. Any different response is written next to the correct one.

Syntax

The examiner reads sentences of increasing length and syntactic complexity to the child and asks him to repeat each sentence exactly as it was spoken.

Any errors are recorded in the test booklet. Three error categories are: word omissions, word additions, and unsuitable word substitutions. The following point values are assigned to each sentence repetition:

3 - any sentence repeated with no errors

2 - any sentence with one error

1 - any sentence with two errors

0 - any sentence with three or more errors

The subtest should be discontinued after three consecutive errors.

Elicited Speech

Two picture story sequences are presented to the child by the examiner. The examiner then asks the child to tell what is happening in each one. The examiner then transcribes what the child has said about the picture sequences noting the total number of words used, the total number of different words used, and the total number of complete sentences.

Tests of Learning Rate and Method

The Tests of Learning Rate and Method provide information concerning how the child best receives, retains, processes, and expresses information. The Tests consists of three sets of word cards in Spanish, Portuguese and Crioulo which have been divided into three levels:

Level I: for use with the non-reader/contains the most regular, simple words in beginning reading.

Level II: contains variant consonant sounds, double vowels, double consonants and medial consonants.

Level III: Contains all of the words in I and II plus consonant blends.

The following steps are followed:

1. Choose an appropriate level for the child; i.e., one in which he can learn forty new words.
2. Determine the forty words to be learned.
3. Select the methods to be utilized for a given day from visual, auditory-phonic, kinesthetic, and combination.
4. Instruct the child for fifteen minutes following specified procedures.
5. At the end of fifteen minutes administer an immediate Recall Test.
6. Administer a delayed Recall Test on the following day before the next lesson is presented.
7. Record the words correctly learned in both immediate and delayed recall, identifying the instructional materials utilized.

The Adaptive Behavior Scales

The Adaptive Behavior Scales provide information concerning the child's behavior in non-educational settings, such as the family and community. A series of questions is asked of the person who best knows the child's developmental history by an examiner using the primary language of the respondent.

The scales consist of five types of questions asked about the child and his behavior at various chronological age levels from age four to age fourteen. The questions concern the child's

- behavior within the family group
- behavior within his peer group
- abilities to be responsible and self-directing
- abilities to look after his own safety and self-maintenance
- abilities to perform consumer related tasks

The questions are designed to be read exactly as they appear and the answers to be "yes" or "no". Credit for the behavior should only be given if the examiner is certain that the child is capable of that behavior.

Questioning begins with the first question of the age level corresponding to the child's chronological age. If "no" responses appear, the examiner proceeds backwards until a level is reached in which the respondent answers "yes" to all questions (Basal Age). Proceed to the level which is one year above and ask questions until no questions are answered "yes" (Ceiling Age).

These levels are recorded on a profile at the end of the child's booklet. The child is given credit on the profile sheet for the year of his Basal Age. One month's credit is given for each response above the Basal Age answered with a "yes" response. When the Ceiling Level is reached the examiner counts the total number of months credit and adds these to the Basal Age resulting in an Adaptivity Age. From this an Adaptivity Quotient can be derived by dividing the child's Adaptivity Age by his Chronological Age and multiplying the figure by 100.

Implications

It is our impression, based on conversation with Special Educators and Bilingual Teachers who have utilized the Brockton Battery, that the impact has been a broadening of the perspective of administrative and instructional staff members concerning the regular and special educational needs of both the Puerto Rican and the Cape Verdean child. This has been accomplished, in our view, due to the emphasis of the information derived from the Brockton Battery on the child's strengths and abilities, not only educationally speaking, but also in the context of his own culture and community.

In addition, the impact on the parents of the Bilingual student has been one of which their sense of participation in the educational experience of their child has been enhanced. This is primarily due to the fact that the parents feel both more aware of their child's needs and more a part of the child's educational planning taking place.

A third impact has been on the nature and quality of communication of the school personnel and parents. The effect of this has been to bring two previously divergent elements of the community together in a common and unified purpose and understanding.

Summary

In summary, The Brockton Battery is a series of non-discriminatory assessments which was developed in response to statutory mandates concerning the needs of minority and bilingual students. It consists of tests of Reading, Language, Learning Method, and Adaptive Behavior which are administered in either Spanish, Portuguese, or Crioulo. It is intended to give a non-biased view of a child, academically as well as socially, in order to develop an appropriate individualized educational plan for the student.

Working Effectively with Minority Parents of Special Needs Students

- Adriana Pellicari Rodriguez

Introduction

When a linguistic or racial minority child has been identified by the school as having special needs, the parent's first reaction is to ask, sometimes in dismay, "What did I do or not do for my child?" Parents also ask how they can help their children to make progress and return to their regular classroom. Minority parents of limited English proficiency feel that by learning something about factors that affect their children's progress in school, they will be better able to support their children's growth in school. By understanding more about their children's overall development, the parent's anxiety is eased about their child being labeled "different".

This article is intended to help educators who interact culturally and linguistically with parents of special needs children. While some of those concerns are common to all parents of exceptional children, several issues that need to be addressed are unique to the condition of belonging to a distinct linguistic, cultural and ethnic group different from the Anglo-American society.

Part One

Children with learning problems usually present a combination of factors. Koppitz (1971), for example, has described six areas of functioning which are characteristic of the pupil who has been referred to special classes because of a learning disability.

Sustained attention and concentration become more difficult to maintain when a child finds the classroom environment is different from his home or neighborhood. The child's native language may be Spanish, or English. Linguistic differences may create additional frustration and adjustment problems in the classroom. Frustration may cause the child to act impulsively or non-responsively. At the same time, a tendency to forget what has been learned may be observed. A second area that may be effected by linguistic and cultural differences is visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.

Anxiety about "feeling" different may restrict visual alertness to details, or the capacity to distinguish fine differences in sounds. Insecurity about following a code of behavior which has not been acquired in the home, may affect motor activity. For example, it may interfere with the copying of what the child sees in the correct sequence or form. If the child cannot repeat what he or she has heard, because he or she is fearful of failure (Guernica, 1980), retention and recall of what has been taught becomes problematic. Under these conditions, time and space perceptions are not adequately integrated into a sequence.

A third important area affected by cultural and linguistic differences is reasoning ability. The child's capacity for logical thinking may be affected by cultural values (Condon et al., 1979), and common sense may not necessarily be an absolute quality. A response to a situation typically given by an Anglo-American child may not be the choice of a child who is in the initial stages of acculturation. His or her values, attitudes and standards of behavior may be at a variance with those of the pre-dominant society because of different experiences within the home environment or the group (Comer, 1980). Consequently, the understanding of everyday situations may become complex. When the comprehension and the application of possible abstract concepts have not been sufficiently practiced during the early childhood years, they may be inadequately developed for the expectations that teachers have in school work in a middle class white school environment. In such a case, the child may learn more directly from his or her experience, than from what he or she reads, particularly when the content of the reading is not thoroughly familiar to the child in terms of lifestyle, family activities, celebrations, topics of conversation, et cetera.

The emotional adjustment of linguistic and racial minority children is a fourth critical element in the total configuration of the child's functioning. His position in the family, and even in the neighborhood, may be affected by losses related to moving and to the necessity of adapting to a new surrounding environment. Therefore, for some time, there may not be enough energy available to meet the new problems and challenges that are posed by school life. If self-confidence is threatened by the insecurity related to a sudden uprooting, for example, new challenges become overwhelming. The child may withdraw from participation (Condon et al., 1979; Guernica, 1980; Rodriguez, 1981) into the fantasy where things can be "the way he or she wants".

Intimately related to emotional adjustment, is the child's social adjustment. Relating to peers of another ethnic group may create ambivalent feelings of "wanting to belong but not knowing how to act". This feeling may lead to confinement with the child's own linguistic peer group, although the child may in fluent in the English language. Relationships to teachers are affected

as well. Respect toward authority figures, a value inculcated by parents of particular cultures, may be interpreted as an inordinate shyness. Criticism offered by peers in an open way during a class discussion, may be perceived by a Hispanic youngster as a threat to his or her personality and individualism (Condon et al., 1979; Fitzpatrick & Travieso, 1980). Concurrently, careful and sensitive consideration for others, a value intrinsic to the Latin culture, may be viewed as a lack of self-reliance and self-assurance and a symptom of dependency, in the wider Anglo-American culture.

According to Koppitz, another significant factor that influences total functioning is the child's background, developmental history, socioeconomic level, cultural and religious beliefs. The child's history may contain a prolonged separation from the family due to the re-establishment of the family's residence in the new land. Sometimes such rupture in family ties becomes so traumatic, it affects the child's whole personality and mode of functioning. He or she may evidence resignation, guilt or helplessness and withdrawal.

Conclusion

The interaction of the areas described above, which are essentially related to the condition of minority status, may impact upon the child's ability to respond adaptively to school tasks and contribute or exaggerate the diagnosis of special needs.

Part Two

There are some ways in which minority parents can minimize their child's chance of spending an excessive amount of instructional time in a resource room for special services. They can become more effective parents, for example, by sharing with the school the responsibility for their child's education. Such involvement requires that they attend to the three basic needs their children have:

1. need for physical growth;

2. need for emotional growth;

3. need for intellectual growth.

According to Jordan (1980, page 31), "To be an effective parent is to promote the actualization of one's children's potentialities at an optimum rate in positive directions". Parental effectiveness must therefore address the following five universal dimensions of child development:

A. Perceptual Dimension

This is the processing and interpretation of information filtered into the child's mind through the senses. Stimulation activities can facilitate an understanding of the world through vision, hearing, and a sense of touch, and create a rich environment for the child, as

well as promote the development of perceptual abilities. Parents may provide many kinds of sounds, textures, wide varieties of shapes, colors, variations in light and shadow, as well as many opportunities for the manipulation of objects within the home. Sewing notions, musical instruments or house utensils may be used to this end.

B. Psychomotor Dimension

This includes the control of muscles and the handling of the body. Retardation of gross and fine motor abilities has been blamed by some educational experts (Rodriguez, 1982) for delay or inability in student academic achievement. The development of posture, balance of the body, integration of the two sides of the body and the dominant use of the right hand-right foot-right eye are important components of motor sequence. Put more plainly, they permit things to run smoothly for the child. Parents are in a position to provide opportunities for motor development through supervised games that strengthen the body muscles in climbing, jumping, running, throwing and catching activities. However, minority parents who have immigrated into large cities from rural towns find it difficult sometimes not to restrict their children from these activities for they fear that the neighborhood or the "street" may not be sufficiently safe for their child (Rodriguez, 1982).

C. Cognitive Dimension

This comprises the processes of thinking and reasoning that are dependent both on language development and on the acquisition of perceptual and motoric skills. Minority parents of limited English proficiency may find themselves in a double-bind situation when they attempt to enhance their child's language development. On the one hand, they may think that their child needs to acquire a good level of English proficiency, in order to be successful in the Anglo-American society; they may thus not view their own language as suitable for educational purposes, for the promotion of thinking and reasoning (Rodriguez, 1980). On the other hand, their limited English proficiency does not allow them to help their child to develop abstract language skills in the second language. Inevitably, a no-win situation may occur. To further compound the problem, these parents are faced with a scarcity of learning materials available in their language, as well as a similar regression and halt to their own (sometimes limitedly developed) literacy.

Sensitive educators can aid linguistic minority parents to resolve the problems which have just been described, by following some of these recommendations:

1. strengthen a sense of identity and competence by nurturing the native language and culture;

2. search and locate learning materials in the native language;

3. visit bilingual classrooms and observe instructional activities (Workshops 1980 & 1981);

4. learn how to use transfer skills from the native language to second language;

5. practice with their children patterns of seriation, classification, induction and deduction, questioning and exploration, which can be built around everyday events (Respuesta, 1980);

6. promote language development in children through

   a. the use of frequent conversations and discussions centered around daily experiences to help form abstract ideas and problem solving skills

   b. increase sustained reading activities likely to infuse in children a love for books, with attention paid to poise, posture, tone of voice, and nonverbal behavior in general

   c. personalize stories and plots that are read with the children, by making the child a protagonist in the story.

D. Affective Dimension

This area includes the organization of thoughts, feelings and behaviors within a positive emotional home environment. Appropriate behavior management techniques enable parents to handle successfully discipline and autonomy in the child. At the same time, effective communication skills allow parents to establish trust with their children through nurturance and support. Furthermore, consistency of behavior, congruence between verbal and nonverbal language and fostering separatedness in the child as an individual all are important issues in the emotional adjustment of the child. They also serve to prevent the development of maladaptive behaviors such as fears, compulsions, conversion of anxiety into body symptoms, or escape and continuous daydreaming. Included in the affective sphere are situational factors related to raising children in two cultures which are, quite often, in conflict. Minority parents can be in a position to contribute substantially to their child's adjustment by gaining an understanding of biculturality. The goal is to learn to adapt to cultural mediation: the ability to shift back and forth between two sets of behavior, one which is accepted in the minority group, and the one which is expected in the larger society. When not skillfully handled, these situational factors may so impact upon the child and weaken or erode his or her self-esteem.

E. Volitional Dimension

This indicates an emerging capacity to make choices about what to do, and to focus upon what is required to accomplish self-selected goals. These goals can become more clearly delineated for their children, if parents adequately communicate their aspirations, wishes and hopes. For example, a recent study (Rodriguez, 1983) has shown that when Hispanic parents are able to articulate to their children in a clear and concrete way the educational expectations they hold for them, they are more likely to enhance their child's goal-oriented behavior toward school achievement, even at a low socio-economic level. However, in order for these goals to be both self-selected and family-approved, parents must also be aware of the difference between rational protection and guidance versus unquestionable control and over-protection.

F. Corollary

Working with a "special needs" child ideally should prove to be an enjoyable experience for both parents and children. The choice of an appropriate time during the day, and the quality of involvement which accomodates the needs of both parent and child are essential ingredients that contribute to the success of a parent in her role as educator. Learning how to effectively communicate needs and wants and how to activate behavior management techniques can help facilitate a satisfying interaction between parent and child. Finally, minority parents must be reminded that a successful acculturation requires an adjustment to the norms and the standards of the majority culture, but not a total replacement of one's native lifestyle (Condon et al., 1979).

Planning for an Effective Parent Participation in the Special Education Process

- Roser Salavert

The rules and regulations of Chapter 766 and Public Law 94-142 require that parents be involved in the special education process and in the implementation of the Individualized Educational Plans (IEP). While it is assumed that the school will inform parents of the regulations and procedures, little is done concerning planning for an effective communication and cooperation between minority parents and the school system.

Limited experience with the American education system as well as limited English language skills puts minority parents at a decided disadvantage in their contacts with the school. If parents are ill informed of the special program's intent and the referral and evaluation procedure, they either will not trust it or will feel very uncomfortable in their participation.

The school system must involve parents in a meaningful manner. Experience in working with minority parents of different cultural backgrounds has indicated that one of the most effective tools is a training program that takes into consideration the needs and values of each parent or group.

The purpose of this article is to introduce you to a Parents Training Program which enable minority parents to fully participate in the special education process. The program can be implemented using either an Individualized or a Group approach, and its specific objectives would enable minority parents to:

- understand the American education system, and specifically special education
- become familiar with the special education process to actively and effectively participate in it
- understand the IEP process
- understand the rights of parents

The Individualized Training vs. Group Training Programs: Advantages and Disadvantages

The advantages of an approach in relation to the other depends primarily upon the characteristics of the parent or parent group. Portuguese parents usually work more efficiently through an Individualized program, while Hispanic

parents tend to prefer the Group Training, and there is a cultural reason for that.

Portuguese families constitute a very closed group composed by its immediate members and extended members (Fonseca, 1980). The ties among family members are very strong and any person's action reflect upon the family. As a result, if one of the children experiences problems in school, and he/she is eligible for special education, parents like to maintain as much privacy as possible and deal with it within the family group. Therefore, they do not feel comfortable when "their" problem is disclosed" by participating in Group Training. If all the parent participants in the Group Training are Portuguese, it becomes very difficult for the Advocate/Trainer to create a relaxed and learning atmosphere.

In contrast, Hispanic parents, and especially Puerto Rican parents respond well to a Group Training. Puerto Rican family ties are strong and the extended family is especially important; however, the concept of extended family as it was understood in the small towns and villages has developed into a more impersonal form of socialization or "social support" (Puerto Rican History, Civilization and Culture). Therefore, the Group Training provides them with an opportunity to find some form of support to confront with the concerns caused by their child's problem and their responsibilities in the special education process.

It is important to note, however, that generalizations are broad and can lead to many prejudices, thus we do not recommend the exclusive use of one approach for a specific culture. We strongly believe that is is the Advocate/Trainer and/or the Special Education Director who have to carefully plan the Parent Training Program that they feel would better fit the needs of their community.

Economically, the Group Training is more efficient, and may also provide an opportunity for meeting new neighbors; however, the efficiency of the Individualized Training Program can be maximized by using volunteers as Advocates/Trainers. Parents with children in special education, volunteers from the community and community leaders have proved to be excellent resources for this Program.

Also, some of the parents that participate in the Training Program (Individualized or Group Training) could be recruited by the school and become Advocate/Trainers. The use of volunteers as Advocate/Trainers for the Group Training requires a careful selection of the candidates and a more intensive training. It is our recommendation to plan for a Group Training when the group characteristics can respond to it, and also if the training is designed as a preventive measure, and participants do not necessarily have children with special needs.

1. "The Luso-American Limbo -- Closer to Heaven or Hell?" Foneseca Issues in Portuguese Bilingual Education, 1980. Donald Macedo, Editor. National Assessment and Dissemination Center for Bilingual Education.

2. Puerto Rican History, Civilization and Culture. A mini documentary. Dissemination Center for Bilingual Bicultural Education, 1973.

Preparing the Ad. te/Trainer

Only informed and effective Advocate/Trainers will help parents to successfully accomplish the purposes of the program training. The potential Advocate/Trainer has to be prepared for his task. The preparation period for the Advocate/Trainer will very much depend upon whether he/she is a special education professional or a paraprofessional. The characteristics of a recommended Advocate/Trainer are:

a. Speaking ability in the primary language of the parent or parent groups

b. Understanding of the parent/parent group cultural values and needs

c. Mastering of regulations of Chapter 766

d. Familiarity with the school system

e. Good Communication Skills (see Checklist in Appendix A)

f. Ability in conducting home visits (see Appendix B).

Individualized Parent Training

The Individualized Training is divided into five phases:

Phase One

The Advocate/Trainer gets acquainted with the case he/she has been assigned as well as with the family. The Advocate/Trainer will review the student's record, usually with a counselor or social worker before the home visit.

If the Advocate/Trainer does not have access to the student's folder (it varies depending upon school policies) the social worker, counselor, or the special education director will be directly responsible for informing the Advocate/Trainer about the student's problem to facilitate the communication with the family.

A first visit and sometimes a second visit is done prior to the team meeting. During the first home visit the Advocate/Trainer tries to fulfill the following purposes:

a. Have the parents understand that their child is experiencing some difficulties in the school.

b. Have them understand the approach the school is taking to confront with their child's problem. An explanation of school system and special education system in the United States in comparison to the educational system of the parents' country of origin is often included. Also, parents' rights are discussed.

c. Establish a good rapport with the family and explain to them his/her role as Advocate/Trainer in that particular situation.

d. Summarize for the parents what is the information they should retain and make them feel comfortable with the questions they will ask.

Phase III

The Advocate/Trainer will accompany the parents to the school evaluation meeting if the child is eligible for special education, as an advocate for the family. The Advocate/Trainer may have to go to the house to pick up the parents. During the meeting, the Advocate/Trainer will:

a. Introduce Team members to parents and vice versa

b. Very briefly report to the Team members, the level of knowledge and understanding of the special education process by the parents.

c. Translate for the parents

d. Ensure that the parents ask the questions they had prepared, and make an effort to facilitate any spontaneous communication between the parents and the team

e. After the meeting discuss main conclusion with the parents making any necessary clarification(s).

Phase IV

The Advocate/Trainer will ensure that parents understand and participate in the procedures, and will guide them with any necessary short-term activities such as: appointment with a physician, transportation issues, etc.

Phase V

The Advocate/Trainer will make a home visit four to five weeks after the IEP is approved to follow-up the case.

Group Training Program

The Group Training is presented in two sessions of approximately two hours each. The number of participants should be limited, and our recommendation is to limit the group to 10-15 participants.

Session I

The Advocate Trainer begins the session by introducing himself and asking the participants to do the same. However, depending upon the group it may be necessary to begin the session in a less formal way, i.e., the Advocate/Trainer

introduces the participants among themselves while the group is still standing up talking or having coffee. Special consideration shall be taken by the Advocate/Trainer to arrange the group the way it fits best to their cultural habits. A round table is very well accepted by Hispanic parents.

The training should aim to the maximum verbal interaction and active listing. It is the Advocate/Trainer's responsibility to facilitate the the communication among participants and encourage questions. The Advocate/Trainer then, will avoid lecture, and use a question based strategy. Session I could be summarized in the following questions:

1. Purpose of the Training

   - What is the purpose of the workshop?
   - What do you expect from this workshop?

2. Description of state and local education system

   - Who is responsible for the education in Massachusetts?
   - Who is responsible for the education in Boston?
   - What is special education?
   - Who is responsible for special education?

3. Special education referral and evaluation process

   - What do you do if your child has difficulties?
   - How is a child referred to special education?
   - What is special education evaluation?
   - How does the school decide that the child needs special education?
   - Does the school district need the parents' permission to do the evaluation?
   - Who pays for the special education evaluation?
   - What can you do as a parent for the evaluation?

Session II

It will proceed as Session I. It may be convenient to ask the parents to introduce themselves again unless the Advocate/Trainer prefers to introduce the parents himself. Particular emphasis shall be put on the second and last part of the session. It focuses on role playing of all parents in order to review and rehearse the different steps of the process from referral to placement.

Content of Session II

1. The Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)

   - What is an Individualized Educational Plan?
   - What should be included in the IEP?
   - How often is your child's IEP reviewed?
   - Who participates in the development of the IEP?
   - What happens if you cannot attend the IEP meetings?

2. Special Education Programs and Alternatives

   - What is the least restrictive environment?
   - What are the different types of programs a student can be placed in?
   - What types of activities will a student experience in this program?

3. Review of Training

   - Key provisions of Chapter 766 and Public Law 94-142
   - Recap of parents' rights
   - The special education process, role playing (see Appendix C)

Concluding Remarks

During the school year 1982-1983, the Department of Education of Rhode Island trained a group of paraprofessionals on the Training Program described here. These Advocate/Trainers are currently implementing this program to pilot groups of minority parents from Central Falls, Pawtucket and Bristol. So far, parents are responding enthusiastically to the Training Program and they are actively becoming involved in the special education process of their children.

Appendix A

Communication Skills List for the Advocate/Trainer

(Individualized Training)

- Establish rapport with the parent(s).
- Ask the parent(s) to share positive information about the child and highlight that information.
- Use the child's name frequently to personalize communications.
- Be well prepared to explain the forms and procedures used by the local school system.
- Share verbal information at an educational level that is most comfortable for the parent.
- Use facial expressions and body language to help parents to understand the intent of communications, not frequently with encouragement.
- Make sure that you are familiar with terminology that might be used be school evaluators; talk to them ahead of the time if you find it more helpful.
- Seat yourself next to the parent to insure that communications from school personnel are primarily directed to the parents who are responsible for decision-making.
- Encourage questions, listen attentively to parent information and share parent's examples with school personnel.
- Keep aware of parent's needs (e.g., limited time away from work schedule), but maintain strong support for continued parental involvement in their child's education. Appraise them that the school may need to have future contacts with them.
- Be accessible to parents for follow-up questions. Phone or visit parents after meeting to insure that parents understand meeting contents.
- Communicate freely with the special education director regarding any issues that will make your role more effective.

Communication Skills List for the Advocate/Trainer

(Group Training)

- Create a pleasant atmosphere by smiling and informally relating to group.
- Be well prepared to explain the forms and procedures utilized by the local school system.
- Share verbal information at an educational level that is most comfortable for the parent(s).
- Use facial expressions and body language to help parents to understand the intent of communications, not frequently with encouragement.
- Make sure that you are familiar with terminology that might be used by school evaluators; talk to them ahead of time if you find it more helpful.

- Encourage questions, listen attentively to parent information and share parent's examples with school personnel.
- Keep aware of parent's needs (e.g., limited time away from work schedule), but maintain strong support for continued parental involvement in their child's education. Appraise them that the school may need to have future contacts with them.
- Be accessible to parents for follow-up questions, phone or visit parents after meeting to insure that parents understand meeting contents.
- Communicate freely with the special education director regarding any issues that will make your role more effective.

Appendix B

Strategies for a Successful Visit to a Non-American Home

When preparing your visit remember that the home visit can fulfill four major purposes:

1. to inform parents
2. to collect information about the child
3. to share information
4. to establish rapport and enlist parents' help.

Adjust yourself to the home culture and not expect the parents to make the accomodation.

Use the native language of the family.

American culture emphasized efficiency, independence and equality. As Advocate/Trainer for minority parents, you should examine these values and realize how they might conflict with the culture of the home to be visited:

Efficiency, be advised to:

1. don't schedule appointments too tightly
2. don't schedule appointments without regard for the parents
3. don't "control" the visit
4. stress information sharing, not information collection
5. don't be too direct to the point.

Independence, be advised to:

1. don't ignore the parent conference for group action or individual action
2. don't discount the parents' beliefs
3. don't describe a child's problem in terms that make the child appear lazy, disinterested or irresponsible.

Equity, be advised to:

1. be aware of the lines of authority or power in that particular culture
2. don't expect traditional democratic forms of exchange
3. respect another culture's view of authority

Appendix C

Outline for Structuring Role Playing

Purpose: Review of the special education process through a visual representation and active parental participation.

I. Introduce the problems

1. Parents can choose to describe a situation or a problem first and then role play it.

2. Point out common need for ways to deal with the problem.

II. Select the Players

parent, special education director, interpretor(s), teacher, etc.

III. Orient the Players to the situation

1. Players may plan very briefly general ideas of what they are going to enact.
2. Remind players of the roles to be assumed.
3. Set the situation.

IV. Prepare the Observers

1. Provide some specific purposes for the observers.

   a. Judge the realistic quality of the performance and solutions.
   b. Directed to concentrate on one role.

V. Role Playing

1. Players must assume roles and live the situation.
2. Players must respond to other players as they feel people in these situations must behave.
3. Players should not be judged for thier interpretation of the character roles or criticized for their acting.

VI. Follow-Up Discussion

1. Encourage parents to consider the possible consequences of the actions proposed in the role playing.

2. Ask open-ended questions.

   a. "How does her ..... feel?"
   b. "What would you do in this situation?"

VII. Replay the Situation

1. Can use same players or new ones.

2. Can begin second role play where first one ended.

VIII. Final Discussion

"What You Need Is an Advocate"

- Noreen Quinn-Curran

Parents who have "gone through" the special education process are sometimes overwhelmed by the decisions they are called on to make, often based on information that is entirely new to them. This may be especially so if the professionals "hold all the cards" by speaking in educational jargon, thus keeping the process closed to the parent. Parents have few options: either agree unquestioningly to what the professionals recommend and thus feel left out of the decision-making process or try quickly to learn the jargon to ensure participation.

Fortunately there is another option - the use of an advocate. Advocates are people who have information, experience, training and interest in the special educational needs of children as well as knowledge concerning the special education laws.

When Needed

There are certain times when an advocate is particularly helpful, and sometimes very necessary. The first time a parent deals with the special education process can be scary, stressful and confusing. An advocate can help by having information and support readily available to the parent.

If the parent does not agree with what school personnel are recommending, an advocate can act in an objective, non-emotional yet supportive role as well as become a sounding board for the parent. The advocate can also assist the parent in expressing her or his viewpoints to school personnel.

When the parents feel strongly that the school's educational plan cannot meet their child's needs and reject the plan by signing in the proper space, there should definitely be an advocate called upon to help with the procedures integral to the appeals process.

Advocates for parents can function at all different levels. A clear-headed neighbor, friend or relative with interest in a child can accompany the parent to the 766 Team Meeting for moral support as well as be the "ears and eyes" - the recorder for the parent. Other advocates with fuller understanding of educational terms and the special education process can actively participate with the parent at meetings concerning the child's educational program. When there is a rejected educational plan, more highly-skilled advocates should become involved, since representing parents in the hearing process requires much more knowledge, skill, and training than assisting parents in the evaluation process and Team meeting level.

Action

There are many people available to assist parents through this process. The first step the parent must take is to call the appropriate agencies and request assistance.

Working with an Advocate

Even though a parent may have an advocate, the advocate does need some help from the parent. The parent needs to obtain all the relevant school records, organize them in chronclogical order (a history), and be willing and available to visit possible school programs and attend workshops to learn about parents' rights under special education laws. The Federation for Children with Special Needs has bi-weekly workshops for parents and other interested people, including some workshops held in the evening. Once a parent has attended the workshop, she or he is elibible for more individualized help, e.g., reviewing the child's educational plan with experienced staff and/or advocates.

A New Career

Some parents and other people who are highly motivated to assist others, have taken advantage of lay advocacy training programs which prepare them to act as advocates for parents and children from the Team meeting level to administrative hearings. The Federation for Children with Special Needs has a well-developed curriculum and an ongoing support and training system to prepare people for these roles. In some cases, advocates are paid for their work.

If you would like more information, call the Federation for Children with Special Needs at 482-2915.

Agencies

The following chart of agencies and their policies/resources should be helpful in determining what agency to choose.

AGENCY	AGES SERVED	FEE	CONTACT PERSON	BILINGUAL CAPABILITY	KINDS OF CASES	LENGTH OF TIME INVOLVED
Developmental Disabilities Law Center 294 Washington Street Boston, MA 02108 Telephone: 426-7020	All Ages	no fee	Intake	No bilingual staff but can provide accommodation e.g. interpreter, so language is not a barrier	Any legal issue related to disability, e.g. in special education, SSI, etc.	Information and referral readily available Advocate/lawyer assigned within a week, if representation is appropriate
Federation for Children with Special Needs 312 Stuart Street Boston, MA 02116 Telephone: 482-2915	0-22	no fee (for information)	Intake	Staff with limited Spanish and French	All disabilities/ special needs	Telephone information readily available Advocate generally assigned within 2 days
Freedom House 14 Crawford Street Roxbury, MA 02121 Telephone: 445-3700	school age	no fee	Salena Draper	no bilingual staff but would find an agency that would assist	Any educational issues	Telephone information readily available Advocate assigned right away
Greater Boston Association for Retarded Citizens - GBREC Office of Program Development and Services 1249 Boylston Street Boston, MA 02215 Telephone: 266-4520	all ages	sliding fee scale	Leela John	Resource parents available who speak Spanish, Italian, etc.	Children and adults with mental retardation as primary diagnosis	Telephone information readily available Advocate assigned within a week's time

AGENCY	AGES SERVED	FEE	CONTACT PERSON	BILINGUAL CAPABILITY	KINDS OF CASES	LENGTH OF TIME INVOLVED
Greater Boston Legal Services 85 Devonshire Street Boston, MA 01109 Telephone: 367-2880	all ages	no fee (if income eligible)	Individual Rights Unit	Staff available who speak Creole, Spanish and French	All special needs special education and discipline issues	Appointments made within one week after initial telephone screening
La Alianza Hispana 409 Dudley Street Roxbury, MA 02119 Telephone: 427-7175	all ages	no fee	Lydia E. Gonzalez	Spanish/ English	Any disability/ special needs issues and other issues of Spanish speaking	Telephone information readily available Advocate assigned within a week
Massachusetts Advocacy Center 2 Park Square Boston, MA 02116 Telephone: 357-8431	3-22	no fee	Barbara Clurman or Thomas Mela	Spanish	Special needs/ disability and other children's issues	Telephone information readily available Staff will respond as quickly as resources allow
Office for Children Help for Children 150 Causeway Street Boston, MA 02114 Telephone: 727-3298	0-22	no fee	Five Area Advocates determined by area	No bilingual staff but advocates have arrangements with other agencies to assist parents	Handle any children's issues 766, SSI, and other agency issues	Telephone information readily available Agency must respond within twenty-four hours to parents' call

AGENCY	AGES SERVED	FEE	CONTACT PERSON	BILINGUAL CAPABILITY	KINDS OF CASES	LENGTH OF TIME INVOLVED
United Cerebral Palsy Association of Metropolitan 71 Arsenal Street Watertown, MA 02172 Telephone: 926-5480	all ages	no fee	Ida Brown, Home Service Director	Spanish speaking staff available 9 to 1	All issues that impact on children and adults with cerebral palsy	Telephone information readily available Advocates readily available for families with an individual with cerebral palsy

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